

TOM COLE
4TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3604

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**Why I'm Voting Against the House Substitute
Amendment to S. 47**

Dear Republican Colleague:

I want to let you know why I will vote against the House substitute to S. 47, the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA"). While the House substitute to VAWA has improved tremendously over what this body passed last Congress, it falls short of giving tribes what they need to keep their women safe.

Unlike the Senate version, the House substitute fails to recognize existing tribal sovereignty that is enshrined in the Constitution by requiring tribes to seek DOJ certification before exercising jurisdiction over non-Indian offenders, and waives tribes' sovereign immunity. It doesn't make sense to force tribes to abdicate part of their sovereignty to exercise another part of their sovereignty.

Like most Republicans, I believe in moving control away from the federal government towards local governments. Tribal governments are local governments, and tribes do a good job of taking care of tribal citizens when they have the resources to do so. Tribes do not support the House substitute to VAWA because it does not adequately recognize sovereignty or give them the tools they need to combat violence against Indian women. I trust the tribes to understand their needs best, and **that is why I will vote against the House substitute and in favor of the Senate VAWA bill, S. 47.**

Sincerely,



Tom Cole
Member of Congress